

SHRI B.S. GNANADESIKAN: Sir, I would like to take this opportunity to get a clarification from the hon. Minister on an alarming situation at Chennai Airport because of the vacancy position which has been shown in Annexure-I, particularly helpers, is more than 200. Sir, at the airport counters of the Indian Airlines, there are no helpers. Due to paucity of staff there is delay in issuing tickets. There is also a problem at the time of loading and unloading, into the aircraft and out of the aircraft, because of the paucity of staff. As a result of this, the departure of the Indian Airlines aircraft is also delayed. I would like to know whether this condition would be taken note of by the hon. Minister and early steps will be taken to redress this problem.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, I will look into the concern raised by the hon. Member.

Opening of new agriculture accounts

*288. SHRI SUDARSHAN AKARAPU: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of new agriculture accounts opened by banks during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) what are the targets set for opening new agriculture accounts during the current financial year (2006-07) and the achievements made there against as on 31st October, 2006; and

(c) the total amount of agriculture credit disbursed by banks during the last three years *vis-a-vis* the targets set by Government/RBI?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The total number of new agriculture accounts opened by Banks (Commercial Banks, Cooperative Banks and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) during the last three years are as under:

Year	(Nos. in Lakh)			
	Commercial Banks	Cooperative Banks	Regional Rural Banks	Total
2004-05	47.74	12.52	18.58	78.84
2005-06	47.27	14.43	17.03	78.73
2006-07*	29.81	7.9	10.51	48.22

(Upto 31st October, 2006)

(b) In terms of the Farm Credit Package announced by Government of India on 18th June 2004, Commercial Banks and RRBs are required to provide loans to 50 lakh new farmers each year during, the period 2004-05 to 2006-07. Accordingly, the overall target for commercial banks and RRBs was fixed at 50 lakh new accounts to be financed during 2006-07. As against this, the achievement in respect of financing of new farmers as on 31st October 2006 is given as under:—

(Nos. in Lakh)		
Agency	Target	No. of Accounts
Public and Private Sector	—	29.81
Commercial Banks		
Regional Rural Banks	—	10.51
Overall	50.00	40.32

No separate target has been set for cooperative banks. However, cooperative banks have financed 7.90 lakh new farmers during 2006-07 (till 31.10.2006).

(c) The total amount of agriculture credit disbursed by banks during the last three years vis-a-vis the targets set by Government is as under:—

(Rs. crore)		
Years	Target	Achievements
2003-04	—	86981.00
2004-05	104500.00	125309.37
2005-06	141000.00	167775.27
2006-07*	175000.00	113733.48

*As on 31.10.2006

SHRI SUDARSHAN AKARAPU: Sir, what are the reasons for not fixing separate targets for opening the new agriculture accounts by the cooperative banks? What measures the Government has taken to revive the cooperative bank system in the country?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, the cooperative banks fall under the jurisdiction of the State Governments, therefore, it would be inappropriate to fix targets for cooperative banks. As far as reviving the cooperative credit

structure is concerned, we had appointed the Vaidyanathan Committee. The Vaidyanathan Committee's recommendations have been accepted. A package for Rs. 13596 crores has been worked out. The State Governments have been invited to sign MoUs with the Government of India and NABARD. Six State Governments have signed MoUs so far and seven have promised to sign this month. Only yesterday the Government of India signed a one billion dollar loan agreement with the Asian Development Bank. We expect a large amount from KFW and the World Bank. We are ready to finance the States where the MoU is signed to revive the cooperative credit structure.

SHRI SUDARSHAN AKARAPU: Sir, the share of money lenders in the overall credit to the cultivator households, that is, farmers has gone up from 16.1 per cent during 1981 to 26.8 per cent during 2002 whereas the share of commercial banks during the same period has come down from 28.8 per cent to 26.3 per cent which is quite alarming and has dangerous consequences in the form of suicides which we all are witnessing in the country, particularly in my State, Andhra Pradesh. What measures does the Government propose to take to eliminate the role of moneylenders and to increase the institutional credit flow to farmers?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, I am not able to comment on the hon. Member's numbers. All that we have said in our answer is that the quantity of credit that is flowing from commercial banks, RRBs and cooperative banks is increasing and the Government of India will more than redeem its promise that the total agricultural credit will be doubled in three years. We did it, almost doubled in two years and this year will far exceed the target. At the same time, I concede that a large number of farmers depend upon their own resources or borrow from moneylenders. I have said this in the House before. Money lending is a subject, which falls under the State Governments. Every State has a law against usury. I have written to the Chief Ministers to take stringent action against those moneylenders who are not registered and moneylenders who charge usurious rates of interest. I have received the response only from a handful of Chief Ministers. I will take this opportunity once again to appeal to the Chief Ministers to use that law to crackdown upon moneylenders who charge usurious rates of interest.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Question Hour is over.